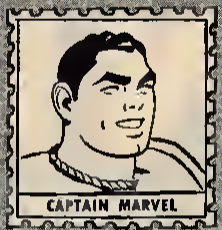
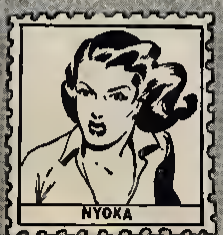
WORLDS BEYOND
STORIES OF WEIRD ADVENTURE
NOV. NO. 1
10¢
SHOCKING!
TERRIFYING!
SUPERNATURAL!
You must read: TWICE ALIVE!

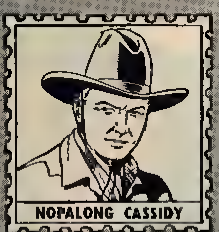
IT'S FAWCETT FOR THE FINEST IN COMIC MAGAZINE ENTERTAINMENT!



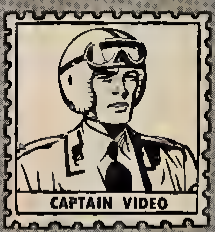


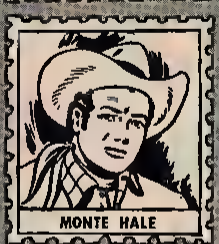
THE

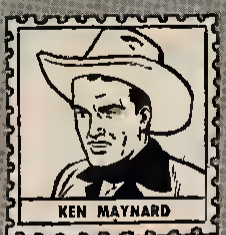
FAWCETT ALBUM OF COMIC FAVORITES

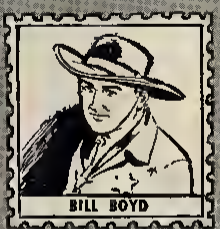


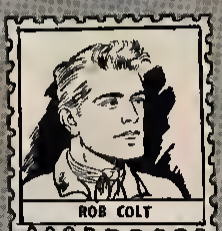
FOLLOW THE ADVENTURES OF THESE FAMOUS HEROES IN THEIR OWN COMIC MAGAZINES REGULARLY!

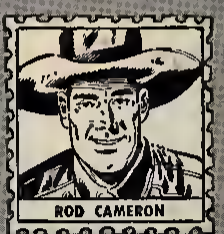












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WILL LIEBERSON

WORLDS BEYOND

STORIES OF WEIRD ADVENTURE

Editor
ROY ALD

Art Editor
AL JETTER

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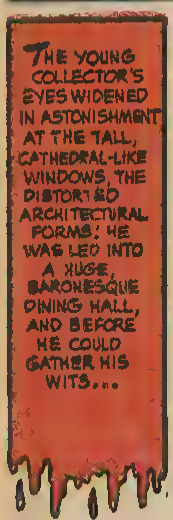
TWO YOUNG MEN, COAT COLLARS TURNED UP AGAINST THE DAMP, WET, BONE-CHILLING COLD, TROD UNEASILY ACROSS THE COBBLESTONES IN A NIGHT-SHROUDED, DESOLATE STREET.
I WONDER WHERE THIS STREET IS LEADING US! WE DIDN'T COME THIE WAY!
GOOD LORD! I WOULD HAVE TO BEFRIEND A COLLECTOR OF OLD PAINTINGS WHO DRAGS ME TO THE MOST GHOULISH CORNERS OF EUROPE TO PURSUE HIS INTEREST!
BUT THINK OF THE REAL PRIZE WE MANAGED TO PICK UP IN THE SMALL, DUSTY LOCAL SHOP FOR A MERE FIFTY FRANCS!
I WOULDN'T HAVE BOUGHT IT AFTER THE SHOPKEEPER TOLD US OF THE STRANGE CURSE REPUTED TO LINGER OVER THE PAINTING!
COME NOW, FRANK! YOU KNOW THEY ARE MORBIDLY SUPERSTITIOUS HEREABOUTS. THE ATMOSPHERE IS UNDERSTANDABLY CONDUCIVE TO SUCH THINKING!
I SHOULDN'T BE SURPRISED IF WE WERE MURDERED IN THE STREETS BEFORE WE FOUND OUR WAY!
REST YOUR FEARS, I BROUGHT A GUN ALONG FOR SAFETY'S SAKE IN THESE DESERTED QUARTERS!
FOR HEAVEN'S SAKES! TO ADD TO OUR PROBLEM IT'S BEGUN TO RAIN! WE'LL BE SOAKING WET IN TEN MINUTES!
NO WE WON'T, FRANK! I'LL RUN INTO THIS PLACE AND USE THE PHONE TO CALL A CAB!
DON'T BE LONG! I DON'T RELISH STANDING OUT HERE ALONE!
A FEW MINUTES, FRANK--NO MORE!
ANXIOUS TO APPEASE HIS DISGRUNTLED COMPANION, LYLE STARTED HASTILY UP THE STONE STEPS AND REACHED FOR THE PENDULOUS DOORKNOCKER. BUT AS HE DID...
THE DOOR--IT'S OPENED OF ITSELF!

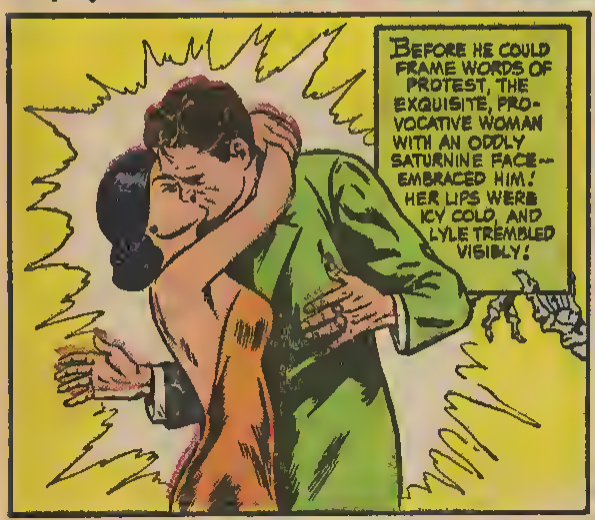
LYLE GASPED INVOLUNTARILY AT THE SUDDEN SIGHT OF THE SMALL, WIZENED, HUNCHED-OVER MAN WITH THE BULGING EYES WHO CONFRONTED HIM WITH AN EERIE FAMILIARITY.
I CAME TO ASK IF ---
ENTER, MASTER. YOU ARE LATE. WE HAVE BEEN AWAITING YOU ANXIOUSLY!

W-WHAT A STRANGE PLACE!
INTO THE DINING ROOM, MASTER--DINNER IS WAITING!


THE YOUNG COLLECTOR'S EYES WIDENED IN ASTONISHMENT AT THE TALL, CATHEDRAL-LIKE WINDOWS, THE DISTORTED ARCHITECTURAL FORMS! HE WAS LED INTO A HUGE, BARONESQUE DINING HALL, AND BEFORE HE COULD GATHER HIS WITS...

LET ME HAVE YOUR RINGS, MASTER. YOU NEVER PARTAKE OF FOOD WITH THEM ON!
THIS IS ALL SOME MISTAKE, I--SAY, WHERE DID I GET THESE ODD, ORNAMENTAL RINGS?

AHHH, RENE--MY DEAR, WHAT HAS KEPT YOU?
MADAM WAS BECOMING ANXIOUS.


BEFORE HE COULD FRAME WORDS OF PROTEST, THE EXQUISITE, PROVOCATIVE WOMAN WITH AN ODDLY SATURNINE FACE--EMBRACED HIM! HER LIPS WERE ICY COLD, AND LYLE TREMBLED VISIBLY!

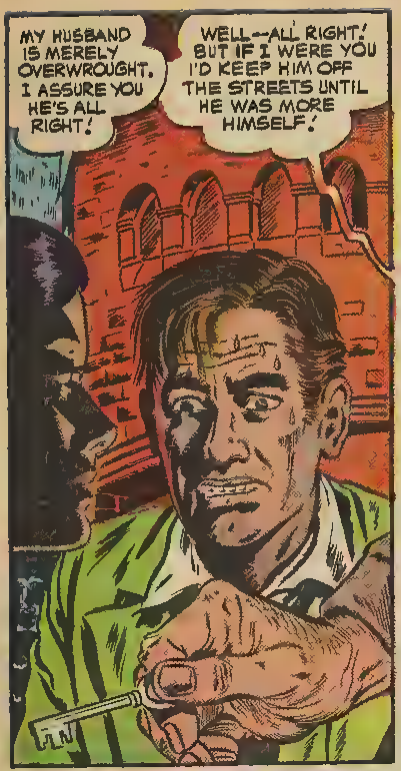
THEY ARE UP TO SOMETHING! EITHER THIS IS A PLOT TO EXTORT MONEY OR SOMETHING IS WRONG WITH THE PAIR OF THEM, MENTALLY! I'D BETTER NOT IRRITATE THEM!
COME, MY DEAR--LET US DINE!

HER EYES MET HIS! AND IN HERS THERE WAS A DEPTHLESS, FATHOMLESS QUALITY THAT WAS FRIGHTENINGLY UNNATURAL! HE FRANTICALLY SOUGHT SOME WAY TO RETIRE AS HE HAD COME!
I--I'M NOT HUNGRY.
AS YOU SAY, RENE--PERHAPS A WARMING DRINK BEFORE THE FIRE WILL BE STIMULATING!
YOUR PLEASURE, SIRE!
BUT LIFTING THE GLASS IN HIS SHAKING HAND, SOME DROPS INADVERTENTLY SPILLED UPON THE ANIMAL SKIN BENEATH HIS FEET!
ACID! IT BURNED A HOLE THROUGH THE ANIMAL SKIN!
AHH, AN ACCIDENT! HERE, RENE--ANOTHER DRINK!
N-NO, NEVER MIND!
CRASH!
IT WAS THEN HE NOTICED THAT UNKNOWINGLY HE HAD PLACED HIS FOOT INTO THE MASSIVE FIREPLACE, AND THE FLAMES WERE LICKING ABOUT HIS SHOE! BUT INCREDIBLY...
T-THE FIRE, IT ISN'T BURNING ME!
YOU ARE, TIRED, RENE--PERHAPS YOU OUGHT TO GO TO YOUR ROOM AND REST AWHILE!
Y-YES! I WILL GO TO THE ROOM!
DESRI, ESCORT THE MASTER TO HIS ROOM!
THIS IS MY CHANCE TO BREAK OUT OF HERE AND GET BACK TO FRANK!

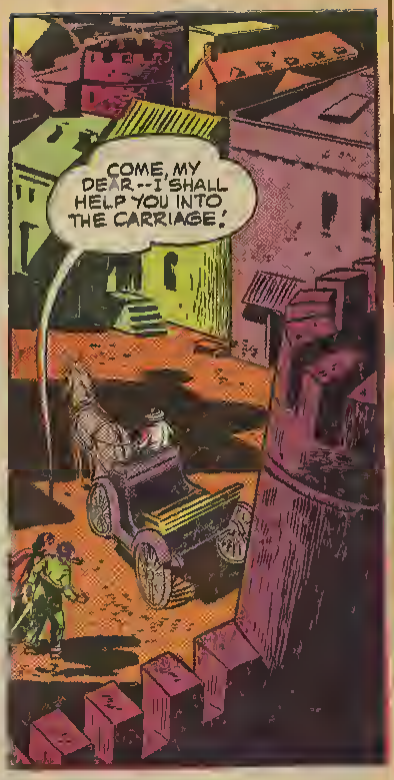
I SHALL HELP UNDRESS YOU, MASTER-- AS YOU ALWAYS INSIST!
NO! NOT TONIGHT! LEAVE ME-- I-I WANT TO BE ALONE!
BUT IN THE WEIRD ROOM, NARROW AND HIGH, COMING TO A CONICAL PEAK...
NO WINDOWS! I WAS PLANNING ON CLIMBING OUT OF ONE!
THE DOOR HAS BEEN LOCKED! I- I'M A PRISONER!
SEIZED BY AN UN-GOVERNABLE PANIC, THE SHOCKED AND ASTOUNDED ART COLLECTOR POUNDED AWAY ON THE BARE WALLS, SHOUTING FRANTICALLY!
LET ME OUT! LET ME OUT! PERHAPS FRANK WILL HEAR ME! FRANK! FRANK! HELP ME!
BAM! BAM!
THE WALL VIBRATED UNDER HIS POUNDING FISTS, AND SUDDENLY--- IT MOVED!
A SECRET PASSAGE! I ACCIDENTALLY SET IT OFF! THANK HEAVEN!
THAT'S STRANGE! I'VE GONE DOWN FOUR LONG FLIGHTS AND THE HOUSE WAS ONLY TWO STORIES HIGH!
BUT DOWN AND DOWN AND DOWN, HE WENT! AS THOUGH INTO THE VERY BOWELS OF THE EARTH! PERHAPS AN HOUR LATER--HE WAS STILL MAKING THE SAME STEEP DESCENT!
IT SEEMS IMPOSSIBLE! UNLESS IT LEADS TO SOME ANCIENT SUBTERRANEAN GROTTO!

AT LAST, BOTTOM! WHY--IT IS THE STREET!
BUT IT WAS NOT THE STREET AS HE HAD EARLIER LEFT IT! AND HE WAS ASTONISHED TO SEE GROUPS OF LAUGHING, CONVERSING PEOPLE--PEOPLE OF A SORT HE'D NEVER ENCOUNTERED BEFORE!
THEIR MANNER OF DRESS, AND THE TORCHES THEY CARRY TO LIGHT THEIR WAY! AS IN THE MIDDLE AGES!
SEE! WHAT MANNER OF A PERSON IS THAT?
T-THEY'RE COMING THIS WAY! I-I'VE GOT TO GET BACK TO FRANK--SOMEHOW!
HOW STRANGE THE CUT OF HIS HAIR!
AND HIS COSTUME!
GET OUT OF MY WAY!
THEY CLOSED IN ABOUT HIM, LEERING, PINCHING, POKING, DERIDING HIM! LYLE STRUCK OUT FRANTICALLY, SMASHING AWAY AT UNYIELDING FLESH!
HE IS STRIKING EVERY-ONE!
HE IS OBVIOUSLY MAD!
COME--WE WILL CART HIM OVER TO THE ASYLUM!
NO! NO! LET ME GO!
MANACLED AND SCREAMING, HE WAS CARTED THROUGH THE STREETS, AN OBJECT OF INCREDULITY TO A POPULACE AS BEWILDERED AS HE!
RELEASE ME! THIS IS A DREADFUL MISTAKE! I-I AM NOT MAD!

BUT ALL HIS STRUGGLES WERE IN VAIN, FOR PRESENTLY, LYLE BAGETT WAS BEING HALF LED, HALF DRAGGED DOWN A DEPRESSINGLY DARK CORRIDOR OF NARROW CUBICLES! HANDS CLAWED AT HIM! AND GARISH-LAUGHTER ROCKED HIM LIKE WAVES POUNDING THE SHORE!
GET HIM IN WITH THE OTHERS IN THE BIG ROOM!
DON'T LOCK ME UP! I BEG OF YOU-- DON'T!
GET IN THERE!
AND THERE, UNLEASHED, AND LEFT TO DANGLE IN THE MIDST OF A TERRIBLE BEDLAM--A HORRIFIC SCENE FROM SOME HADES OF TORMENTED SOULS, THE YOUNG COLLECTOR WAS STRUCK BY A SUDDEN, ANGUISHED THOUGHT!
P-PERHAPS I DO BELONG HERE! PERHAPS THIS IS THE REALITY AND ALL ELSE IS A DREAM! NO-- WHAT'S WRONG WITH ME?
HE FORCED HIS EYES SHUT AND TRIED TO CLOSE HIS MIND TO THE HYSTERICAL THRASHING AND RANTING ABOUT HIM. BUT NO SOONER HAD HE SETTLED ON THE SKIMPY STRAW MAT...
COME ON WITH ME!
A-ARE YOU RE-LEASING ME? TELL ME!
--YOU!
OF COURSE, MY DEAR-- I AM TAKING YOU HOME!


MY HUSBAND IS MERELY OVERWROUGHT. I ASSURE YOU HE'S ALL RIGHT!
WELL--ALL RIGHT! BUT IF I WERE YOU I'D KEEP HIM OFF THE STREETS UNTIL HE WAS MORE HIMSELF!

THE THOUGHT OCCURRED TO HIM THEN HE OUGHT TO BREAK AND RUN--MAKE HIS ESCAPE--BUT...
W-WHERE WOULD I GO TO? AND I'M SO WEAKENED NOW, THEY'D ONLY CATCH ME AND LOCK ME UP HERE AGAIN! I COULDN'T STAND THAT!


COME, MY DEAR--I SHALL HELP YOU INTO THE CARRIAGE!

HE STEPPED INTO THE SPLENDID CARRIAGE UNPROTESTINGLY, CLOSE TO THE POINT OF UTTER EXHAUSTION.
WHAT DO YOU WANT OF ME NOW?
COME, RENE--DON'T CARRY ON SO! YOU HAVE BEEN WORKING TOO HARD LATELY.

HERE--SWALLOW THIS TABLET. IT WILL CALM YOUR NERVES.
N-NO--ULP!

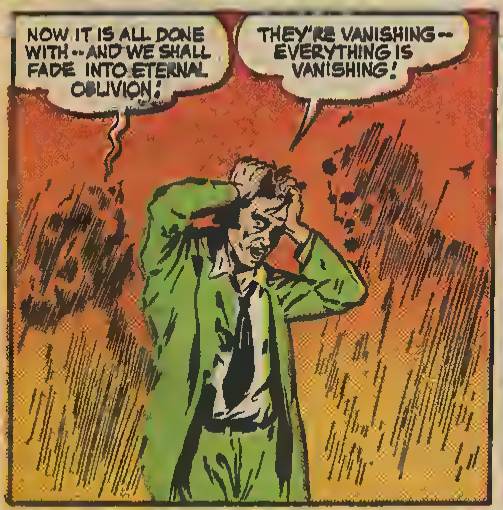
DESRI--FASTER NOW! FASTER!
I-I FEEL SO DROWSY!

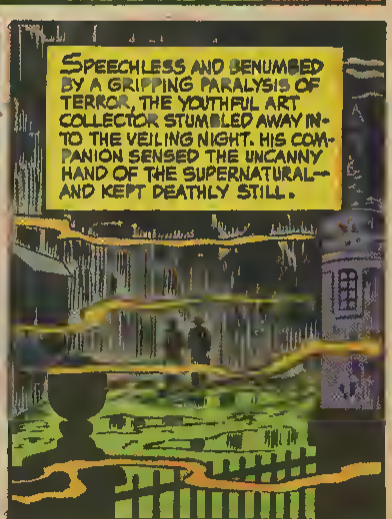
THE TRUSSING UP WAS EVIDENCE OF A VIOLENT FATE PLANNED FOR HIM, AND LYLE TRIED EVERY DOOR IN SIGHT FOR THE WAY OUT!

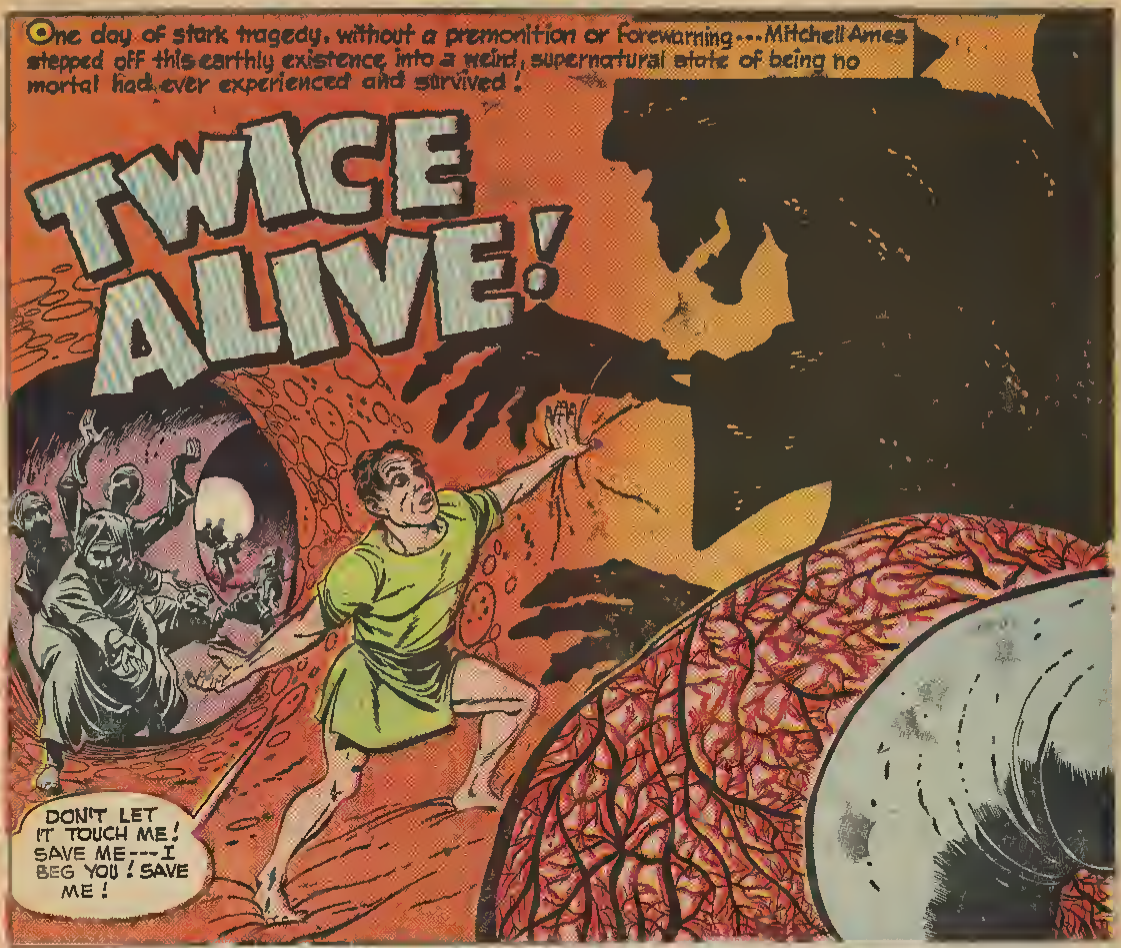
HE HESITATED FOR SEVERAL FRANTIC SECONDS, NOT KNOWING WHICH WAY TO TURN! BUT HAVING NO OTHER RECOURSE, HE FLED DOWN THE LONG, DARK CORRIDOR!
THEY'RE COMING AFTER ME!
A STAIRCASE! IT'S LIKE THE ONE I DISCOVERED IN THE SECRET PASSAGE! MAYBE THIS ONE LEADS OUT ONTO THE STREET!
HIS POUNDING HEART KEPT PACE WITH HIS HURRIED STEPS IN THE TORTUOUS DESCENT TO AN UNKNOWN DESTINATION, THEN...
A MEDIEVAL TORTURE CHAMBER!
NO! NO!
YOU HAVE GONE AS FAR AS YOU CAN, MY DEAR, RENE!
SO INTENT WAS HE UPON THE NEARING THREAT OF HIS PURSUERS, THAT HE DID NOT SEE THE DEEP STONE PIT BEFORE HIM!
AIEEEE!
W-WHAT IS THIS? OH-- IT'S CRAWLING WITH SNAKES!
--BOLTED!
LET ME OUT OF HERE! HELP ME! HELP ME!

DESR!--MY EASEL AND CANVAS! AND MY BRUSHES!
Y-YOU'RE GOING TO PAINT A PICTURE? OH, NO!
AND IT WAS AT THAT MOMENT OF GROTESQUE UNREALITY, AS LYLE LOOKED ON IN AMAZEMENT AT THE COMPOSED WOMAN STARTING TO PAINT A MAN STRUGGLING FOR HIS LIFE IN A SNAKE PIT, THAT HE REALIZED THE BEWILDERING TRUTH!
THIS SCENE! IT IS THE SAME AS IN THE PAINTING I JUST BOUGHT FROM THE SHOPKEEPER! BUT WHAT DOES IT MEAN?
RENE, MY DEAR, YOU HAVE ALWAYS BRAGGED ABOUT BEING THE GREATER ARTIST; MUCH FINER THAN I! AND I HAVE HATED YOU FOR IT, AND SOUGHT AWAY FOR MY NAME AND MY ART TO LIVE LONGER THAN YOURS!
NOW I HAVE THAT WAY! I HAVE HAD THIS PIT PREPARED FOR THIS MOMENT! I AM GOING TO PAINT YOU IN THE ACT OF BEING DESTROYED BY THOSE SERPENTS; I WILL PAINT MURDER FROM LIFE ITSELF--AND I SHALL PAINT IT WITH YOUR OWN BLOOD!
THE PICTURE WAS CURSED! SOMEHOW BY POSSESSING IT I HAVE GONE BACK INTO THE PAST--AND BECOME THE MURDERED MAN, RENE MAURIER, HUSBAND OF TUCOS MAURIER, THE ANCIENT WOMAN ARTIST WHOSE PAINTING I BOUGHT!
HE SLAPPED HIS SIDES IN DESPAIR, AND BY A STROKE OF CHANCE, HIS HAND TOUCHED UPON A FORGOTTEN OBJECT IN HIS POCKET!
MY GUN! I--I'LL BLAST THE DOOR OPEN!
DESR! DON'T LET HIM GET AWAY!
BANG!
BANG!
BANG!

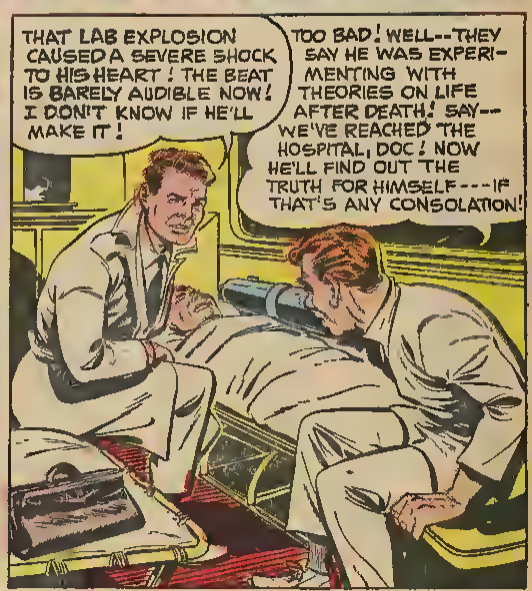
THE EXPLOSIVE IMPACT OF THE GUN--A WEAPON STILL OF THE FUTURE IN THAT PERIOD, SEVERED THE THREAD TO THE PAST! A WEIRD PHANTASMAGORICAL FIGURE MATERIALIZED BESIDE LYLE OUT OF THIN AIR!

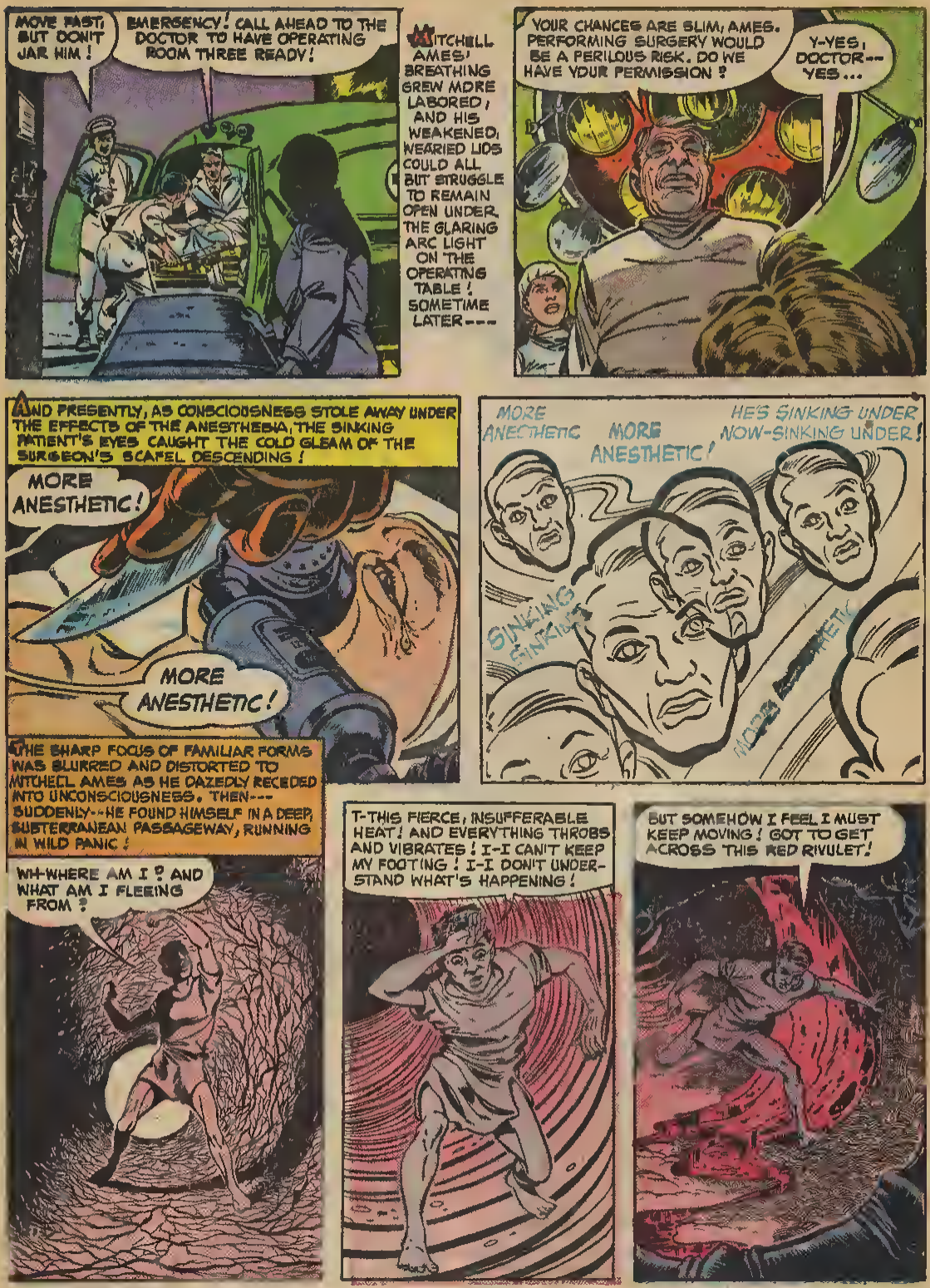




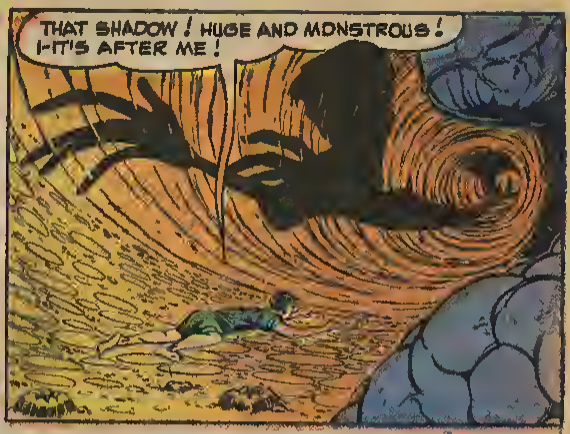

One day of stark tragedy, without a premonition or forewarning---Mitchell Ames stepped off this earthly existence into a weird, supernatural state of being no mortal had ever experienced and survived!
TWICE ALIVE!
DON'T LET IT TOUCH ME! SAVE ME---I BEG YOU! SAVE ME!

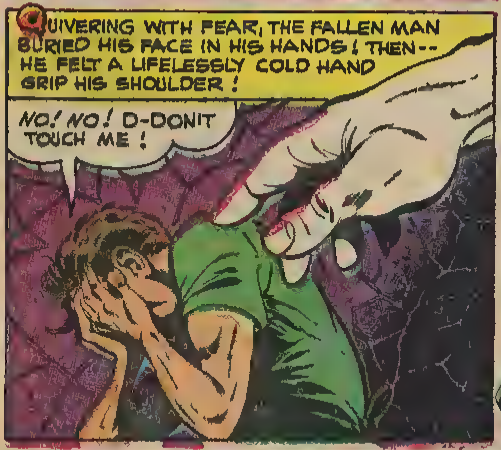
THE WAIL OF THE SIREN WAS LIKE A CRY OF HUMAN ANGUISH AS AN AMBULANCE SKIDDED TREACHEROUSLY ACROSS RAIN-SWEPT STREETS ON A DARK AUTUMNAL NIGHT!
SCREEE SCREEEE


THAT LAB EXPLOSION CAUSED A SEVERE SHOCK TO HIS HEART! THE BEAT IS BARELY AUDIBLE NOW! I DON'T KNOW IF HE'LL MAKE IT!
TOO BAD! WELL--THEY SAY HE WAS EXPERIMENTING WITH THEORIES ON LIFE AFTER DEATH! SAY--WE'VE REACHED THE HOSPITAL, DOC! NOW HE'LL FIND OUT THE TRUTH FOR HIMSELF---IF THAT'S ANY CONSOLATION!


MOVE FAST, BUT DON'T JAR HIM!
EMERGENCY! CALL AHEAD TO THE DOCTOR TO HAVE OPERATING ROOM THREE READY!
MITCHELL AMES' BREATHING GREW MORE LABORED, AND HIS WEAKENED, WEARIED LIDS COULD ALL BUT STRUGGLE TO REMAIN OPEN UNDER THE GLARING ARC LIGHT ON THE OPERATING TABLE! SOMETIME LATER---
YOUR CHANCES ARE SLIM, AMES. PERFORMING SURGERY WOULD BE A PERILOUS RISK. DO WE HAVE YOUR PERMISSION?
Y-YES, DOCTOR--YES...
AND PRESENTLY, AS CONSCIOUSNESS STOLE AWAY UNDER THE EFFECTS OF THE ANESTHESIA, THE SINKING PATIENT'S EYES CAUGHT THE COLD GLEAM OF THE SURGEON'S SCALPEL DESCENDING!
MORE ANESTHETIC!
MORE ANESTHETIC!
MORE ANESTHETIC!
MORE ANESTHETIC!
HE'S SINKING UNDER NOW-SINKING UNDER!
SINKING SINKING
THE SHARP FOCUS OF FAMILIAR FORMS WAS BLURRED AND DISTORTED TO MITCHELL AMES AS HE DAZEDLY RECEDED INTO UNCONSCIOUSNESS. THEN--- SUDDENLY--HE FOUND HIMSELF IN A DEEP, SUBTERRANEAN PASSAGEWAY, RUNNING IN WILD PANIC!
WH-WHERE AM I? AND WHAT AM I FLEEING FROM?
T-THIS FIERCE, INSUFFERABLE HEAT! AND EVERYTHING THROBS AND VIBRATES! I-I CAN'T KEEP MY FOOTING! I-I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT'S HAPPENING!
BUT SOMEHOW I FEEL I MUST KEEP MOVING! GOT TO GET ACROSS THIS RED RIVULET!

HE SLIPPED AND FELL A DOZEN TIMES, STRUGGLING TO HIS FEET AND PUSHING ON! THE EFFORT TO BREATHE WAS LIKE LIQUID FIRE BURNING INSIDE HIM! AT LAST, HE COLLAPSED EXHAUSTEDLY!
I-I CAN'T GO ANY FURTHER! AND I HEAR SOMEONE COMING!


THAT SHADOW! HUGE AND MONSTROUS! I-IT'S AFTER ME!


QUIVERING WITH FEAR, THE FALLEN MAN BURIED HIS FACE IN HIS HANDS! THEN--HE FELT A LIFELESSLY COLD HAND GRIP HIS SHOULDER!
NO! NO! D-DON'T TOUCH ME!

--GRANDFATHER! BUT IT CAN'T BE YOU! YOU'VE BEEN DEAD FOR SEVENTEEN YEARS! AND YOU---GREAT-GRANDFATHER! I RECOGNIZE YOU FROM A PHOTOGRAPH!

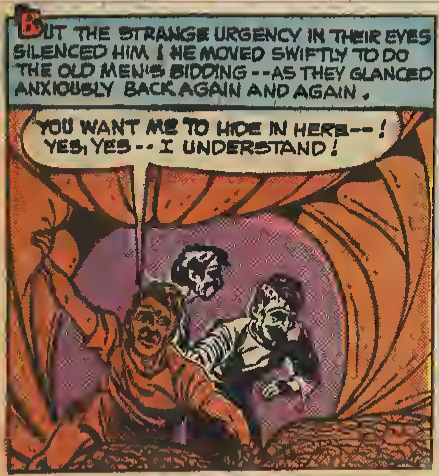
HORROR-STRUCK, MITCHELL AMES COULD NOT GRASP THE INCREDIBLE COURSE OF EVENTS! THEY HELPED HIM TO HIS FEET ANXIOUSLY, AND---
I-I'M TOO TIRED TO GO ON! WHO IS THAT YOU ARE RESCUING ME FROM?

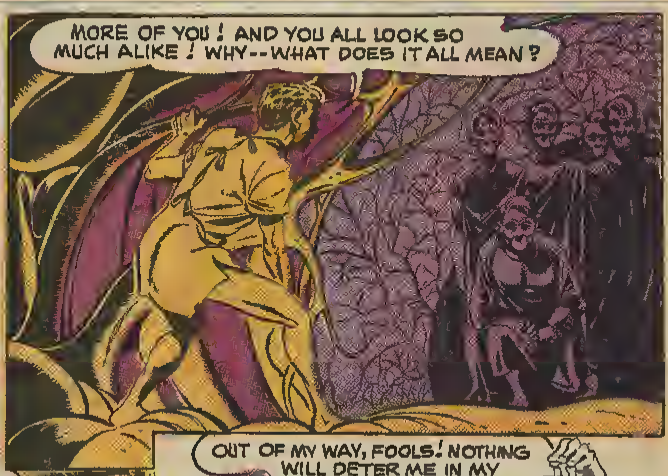
WHERE ARE YOU TAKING ME? PLEASE---TELL ME WHAT'S GOING ON!

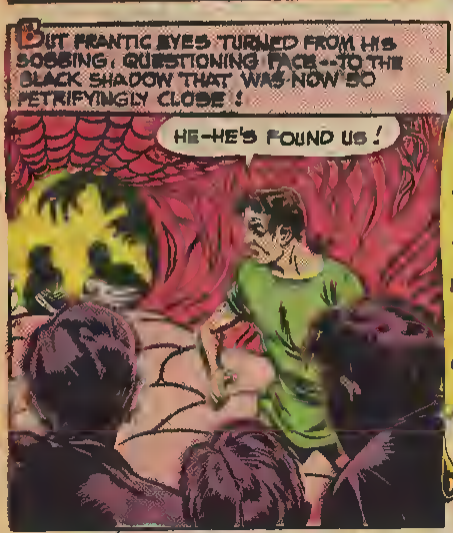
WHY DON'T YOU ANSWER ME ? FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE --- ANSWER ME !

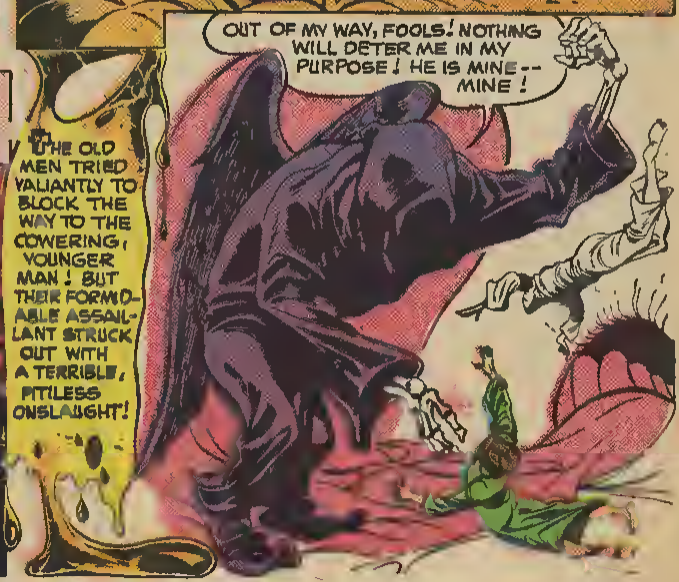
THEY TURNED GRAVELY AND FACED THEIR WEEPING, BESEECHING DESCENDANT ! AND IN THAT STARK INSTANT--MITCHELL AMES BECAME AWARE OF A STARTLING FACT !

YOU HAVE NO MOUTH TO SPEAK WITH !


BUT THE STRANGE URGENCY IN THEIR EYES SILENCED HIM ! HE MOVED SWIFTLY TO DO THE OLD MEN'S BIDDING --AS THEY GLANCED ANXIOUSLY BACK AGAIN AND AGAIN .
YOU WANT ME TO HIDE IN HERE--! YES, YES -- I UNDERSTAND !

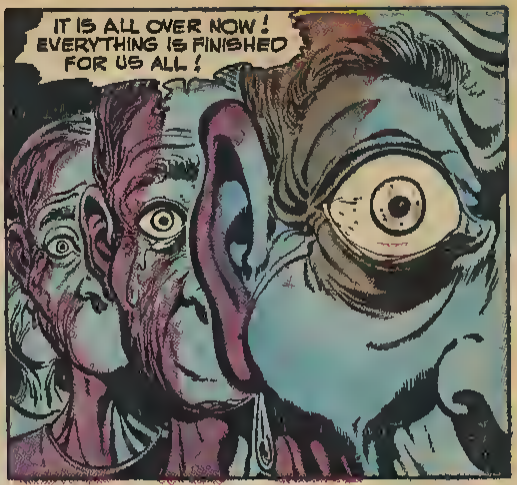

MORE OF YOU ! AND YOU ALL LOOK SO MUCH ALIKE ! WHY--WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN ?

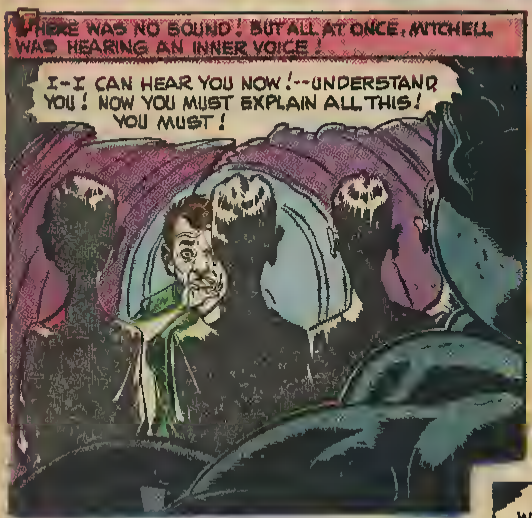

BUT FRANTIC EYES TURNED FROM HIS SOBBING, QUESTIONING FACE--TO THE BLACK SHADOW THAT WAS NOW SO PETRIFYINGLY CLOSE !
HE-HE'S FOUND US !

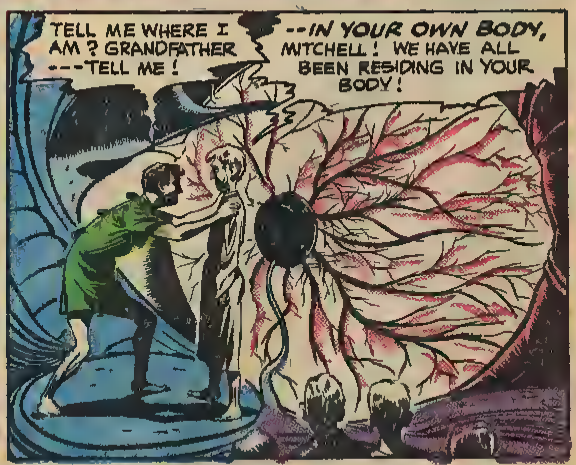

THE OLD MEN TRIED VALIANTLY TO BLOCK THE WAY TO THE COWERING, YOUNGER MAN ! BUT THEIR FORMIDABLE ASSAILANT STRUCK OUT WITH A TERRIBLE, PITILESS ONSLAUGHT !
OUT OF MY WAY, FOOLS ! NOTHING WILL DETER ME IN MY PURPOSE ! HE IS MINE-- MINE !

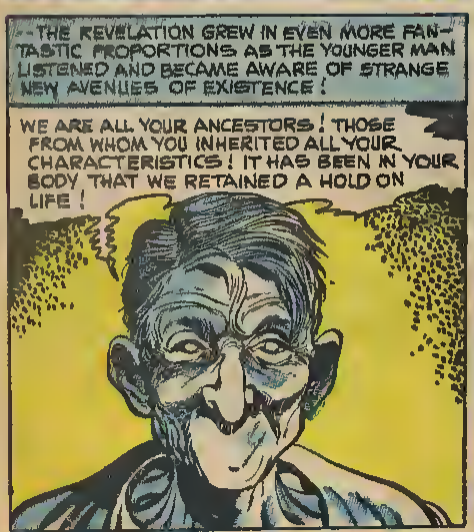
LET ME AT HIM! LET ME AT HIM, I SAY!
NEW STRENGTH STEMMING FROM HIS FEAR, MITCHELL AMES MADE ANOTHER BID FOR SAFETY! BUT EVEN AS HIS UNSTEADY LEGS CARRIED HIM, THE TELL-TALE SHADOW FELL OMINOUSLY ACROSS HIS PATH!
GET AWAY FROM ME! LET ME GO!
NO! NO! AIEEEEE!
THE WAY OF ALL FLESH! HA, HA, HA, HA! THE WAY OF ALL FLESH! ULTIMATELY--IT YIELDS TO ME!
IN THE END--I TRIUMPH OVER ALL!
AND AS THE GRUESOME FORM RECEDED INTO THE DISTANCE, HIS GARISH LAUGHTER STILL ECHOING DOWN THE LONG GROTESQUE CORRIDORS--HIS YOUTHFUL VICTIM LAY STRANGELY IMMOBILE UPON THE GROUND!
I-I FEEL NUMB---! NO SENSATION WHATSOEVER!

HE PUSHED HIMSELF UPRIGHT, TO SEE THE MOURNFUL OLD MEN STANDING OVER HIM WITH A MELANCHOLY HOPELESSNESS!
BUT WHY DO YOU WEEP? HE HAS NOT HARMED ME!

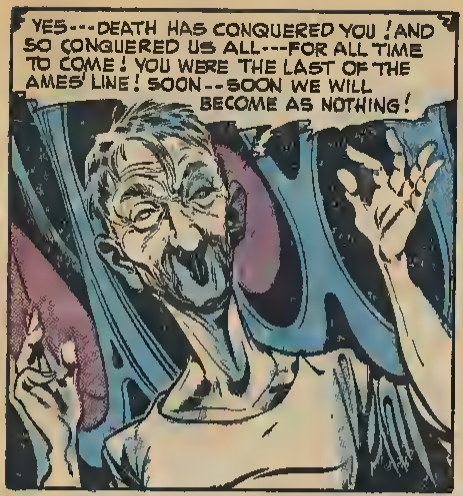

IT IS ALL OVER NOW! EVERYTHING IS FINISHED FOR US ALL!

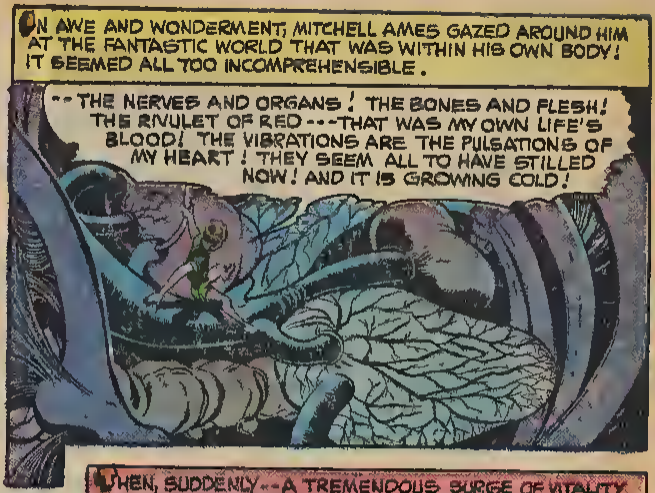

THERE WAS NO SOUND! BUT ALL AT ONCE, MITCHELL WAS HEARING AN INNER VOICE!
I-I CAN HEAR YOU NOW!--UNDERSTAND YOU! NOW YOU MUST EXPLAIN ALL THIS! YOU MUST!

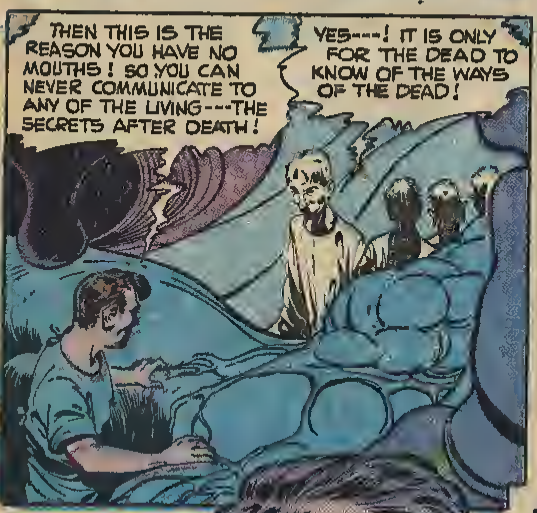

TELL ME WHERE I AM? GRANDFATHER ---TELL ME!
--IN YOUR OWN BODY, MITCHELL! WE HAVE ALL BEEN RESIDING IN YOUR BODY!


--THE REVELATION GREW IN EVEN MORE FANTASTIC PROPORTIONS AS THE YOUNGER MAN LISTENED AND BECAME AWARE OF STRANGE NEW AVENUES OF EXISTENCE!
WE ARE ALL YOUR ANCESTORS! THOSE FROM WHOM YOU INHERITED ALL YOUR CHARACTERISTICS! IT HAS BEEN IN YOUR BODY THAT WE RETAINED A HOLD ON LIFE!

WE TRIED TO SAVE YOU SO WE COULD SAVE OURSELVES! BUT IT IS TOO LATE NOW!
T-THEN THAT WEIRD FORM WAS DEATH!


YES---DEATH HAS CONQUERED YOU ! AND SO CONQUERED US ALL---FOR ALL TIME TO COME ! YOU WERE THE LAST OF THE AMES' LINE ! SOON--SOON WE WILL BECOME AS NOTHING !


IN AWE AND WONDERMENT, MITCHELL AMES GAZED AROUND HIM AT THE FANTASTIC WORLD THAT WAS WITHIN HIS OWN BODY ! IT SEEMED ALL TOO INCOMPREHENSIBLE .
--THE NERVES AND ORGANS ! THE BONES AND FLESH ! THE RIVULET OF RED---THAT WAS MY OWN LIFE'S BLOOD ! THE VIBRATIONS ARE THE PULSATIONS OF MY HEART ! THEY SEEM ALL TO HAVE STILLED NOW ! AND IT IS GROWING COLD !


THEN THIS IS THE REASON YOU HAVE NO MOUTHS ! SO YOU CAN NEVER COMMUNICATE TO ANY OF THE LIVING---THE SECRETS AFTER DEATH !
YES---! IT IS ONLY FOR THE DEAD TO KNOW OF THE WAYS OF THE DEAD !

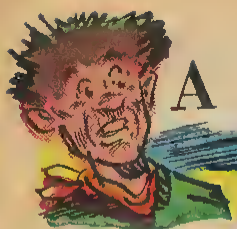
THEN, SUDDENLY--A TREMENDOUS SURGE OF VITALITY PULSATED THROUGH HIM ! AND THE STRANGE WORLD AROUND HIM, HEAVED AND THROBBED AGAIN !
SOMETHING IS HAPPENING TO ME ! THE NUMBNESS IS GONE !

I FEEL AS I DID BEFORE HE TOUCHED ME !

HIS COLOR HAS RETURNED !
YES--! YES ! HE IS ALIVE ! IT IS A MIRACLE !

LOOK! HE HAS HEARD!
BUT EVEN AS THE RESUSCITATED MITCHELL AMES AND THE OLD MEN EXULTED OVER THE NEW TURN OF EVENTS--THE OMINOUS BLACK SHADOW MENACINGLY REAPPEARED!
RUN, MITCHELL! IT MUST NOT HAPPEN AGAIN! WE WANT TO LIVE THROUGH YOU!
RUN, MITCHELL! RUN!
THERE IS NO CREVICE OR CORNER WHERE YOU CAN HIDE! NO WALL I CANNOT SCALE! NO PEDESTAL I CANNOT REACH! YOU ARE LOST--MITCHELL AMES---LOST!
AS THE COLD, IMMUTABLE HAND OF DEATH REACHED OUT, HOWEVER--AN ASTONISHING THING OCCURRED!
I-I'M RISING---AND FADING AWAY! BEFORE HE CAN TOUCH ME!
NO! NO! THIS CANNOT BE! YOU ARE MINE---MINE! RETURN! RETURN! I COMMAND YOU!
BUT THE IMAGE OF MITCHELL AMES HAD DEPARTED THE WORLD BEYOND---AND HE FELT HIMSELF FALLING IN A SINKING CIRCLE!
VISIONS THAT HAD STIRRED HIS IMAGINATION AND SHOCKED HIM---WERE NOW BEINGS IN ANOTHER UNIVERSE!

THEN A BRIGHT, GLARING LIGHT PIERCED THE DARKNESS---AND THE PUNGENT ODOR OF ANTISEPTIC TITILATED HIS NOSTRILS! HE WAS ON THE OPERATING TABLE!
DO YOU THINK HE--
LOOK! HE'S COMING OUT OF IT NOW!
AMES! AMES! HOW DO YOU FEEL? YOU'RE GOING TO BE ALL RIGHT!
I-I HAD A--A-- GHASTLY DREAM!
WELL--YOU GOT OFF EASY! DO YOU KNOW, YOU WERE ACTUALLY DEAD--FOR EIGHT MINUTES? IT WAS A MIRACLE WE REVIVED YOU!
WE PERFORMED A RADICAL NEW OPERATION THAT SAVED YOUR LIFE!
I JUST HEARD ABOUT THE ASTONISHING OPERATION YOU PERFORMED, GENTLEMEN! AS MEDICAL DEAN OF THIS HOSPITAL--I'M PROUD TO HAVE YOU ON MY STAFF!
THANK YOU, SIR! THE PATIENT IS ALREADY OUT OF ANESTHESIA!
THE DISTINGUISHED MEDICAL DEAN, WHOSE EYES HAD NEVER WAVERED IN WITNESSING THOUSANDS OF RARE, MAJOR OPERATIONS, LOOKED DOWN AT MITCHELL AMES AND--GREW DEATHLY PALE!
OH, NO! I---I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE IT!
--MY LORD!
I-IT'S SUPERNATURAL!
INADVERDENT GASPS BROKE FROM THE TREMBLING LIPS OF THE OPERATING CREW AT THE GHASTLY SIGHT BEFORE THEM!
MITCHELL AMES' MOUTH WAS GONE! THE SKIN WAS SMOOTHLY SEALED AS THOUGH IT WERE NEVER THERE!



A FAVOR RETURNED

By Arthur Sachary

THAT NIGHT the cold wind blew from the North, rippling the water and making it lap softly against the side of the boat. A man was hunched over in the boat, crooning a soft, bitter song to himself. "She's just got to do it," he sang. He moaned it over and over again, as if trying to reassure himself.

The man lifted his head and shuddered. It was the crazy nightly wail of the loon that he heard. The loon must be nesting somewhere on the small island in the center of the lake. It was where she lived—the *witch*.

The clouds parted and the cold light of the moon broke through for the first time that night. Jeb Randall laid his blue-steel gun on the seat and took the oars in hand.

He put his muscle to the task and the boat shot across the water, cutting for the island. A dozen strokes were enough. Jeb rested on the oars as the boat glided toward a small inlet. The bird's cry shrilled out, much closer now, laughing at him, mocking his courage.

Jeb wet his dried lips with the tip of his tongue. You gotta hold on to your nerve, he told himself. It was this night or never. Last night had been different. Tonight there was no reason to be afraid. There was no reason for letting Sam Barker live another night without misery. He had laughed at Jeb and cheated him for the final time last night. Now the laugh on Sam's face would twist up into a cry of pain. And Jeb would see that it would not stop—not until he knew Sam was dead. The *witch* would do that for him.

The boat slipped softly into the inlet. Jeb guided it forward, pulling on the overhanging branches which shut out all light and created a black cavern. The boat scraped to a stop, and Jeb looped a rope around a tree stump. The boat was secured.

He slipped over the side and his hunting boots sank into the soft mud. There was a sucking sound as the mud reluctantly gave up its hold and Jeb pulled himself up onto firm ground. His eyes searched the darkness until he found a path faintly visible through the thick underbrush, and then he started out.

Entangling vines wound around Jeb's ankles and branches snapped and lashed his face. Up ahead there was a sudden burst of yellow light which quickly died, as if someone had opened a door and shut it again quickly. For a moment, Jeb fought off the panic which swept over him and would command him to return to the boat and safety. But he had to keep his nerve, that he knew. He hadn't come this far to turn in his tracks and run like a child trapped in a cemetery at night. There was no turning back. Sam must pay for his treachery.

Warily, Jeb stole down the path. The underbrush thinned out and the light of the sky, the stars and the moon beckoned. The path ended up in a clearing. Jeb paused to catch his breath, and then padded across the clearing until he stood no less than ten yards from the old shack. The steel of his rifle burned into his cold, sweating hands. Then Jeb felt his heart turn to rubber and his blood to water, for the door of the shack was slowly opening. Yellow light poured out on the cracked, warped steps.

Standing in the doorway was the ugliest woman Jeb Randall had ever seen—the *witch*. As Jeb drew closer, his eyes studied the shrivelled skin, the thin, gray, stringy hair and the hawkish nose. The wrinkled lips, sucked in over the gums, parted, and the witch cackled, "I knew you'd come soon."

Jeb stirred uneasily.

"The signs never lie." She had *known* and had been waiting for him. She had read his innermost thoughts and found the secret hate that had been festering in his mind. A high-pitched cry of triumph rose from her lips and was wafted upwards like smoke from a fire.

"Do you want me to tell you why you've come?" she asked.

Jeb shook himself numbly. Terror lumped in his throat and spread from there to the rest of his body. He tried to make words with his tongue and lips, but they would not come. He fought the terror which was his master. He needed her, the old *witch*.

"Voodoo," Jeb said at last in a weak voice. "Sam Barker, I wanna see him hurt. I want you to put a hex on him."

Her eyes bored into Jeb's. "You be Jeb Randall," she said. She threw back her head and laughed mirthlessly and silently, racked by a joke that Jeb could not understand.

The old witch raised a claw-like hand and beckoned Jeb to come to her. Jeb stepped forward and put a moist wad of tightly folded bills in her hand without touching her.

She turned her back on Jeb, and he followed her into the shack. A cast-iron caldron hung in the fireplace, glowing red with the heat from a bed of coals. A foul-smelling brew boiled and bubbled in the pot. The witch stood before the caldron, stirring the brew with a knobby stick as she mumbled her chant, alternating Sam Barker's name with those of the foul ingredients in her potion.

At last she stopped. "A picture," she rasped, "Of Sam Barker. Did you bring one?"

She wrenched the photograph from Jeb's hand. Her eyes fed greedily on Sam's face. Then she tossed the likeness into the brew where it floated a moment and then dissolved. She bent down and snatched a piece of charred wood from the fire.

Jeb followed the witch across the room. She removed a crudely-made doll from a hook in the wall, and quickly sketched a likeness of Sam Barker's face on the doll's blank face.

The witch turned on her heel. "Come," she said. Jeb hurried after her, following her out of the shack, into the cold night. The sweat beaded on his forehead as he struggled to keep up with the old witch running down a trail that was marked out only for her eyes.

Jeb sucked in great gulps of air. But it was not enough. His lungs ached as if the witch, herself, were sharpening her claws on them. Inside him, a voice warned Jeb not to lose sight of the witch. He must not lose her. The pains shooting up his legs and his back must be ignored. He was close to revenge and he wouldn't let it slip through his fingers now. Sam Barker couldn't escape him now.

Suddenly the old witch raised her hand and came to a halt in the dense blackness of the woods. Jeb limped to a halt, fighting for his wind. "Here," she said, "is where I will finish the voodoo."

With pins the witch affixed the effigy of Sam Barker to a tree. She looked slyly at Jeb through narrowed eyes. "How," she said, "do you want Sam Barker to suffer?"

Jeb trembled. He shook his head numbly. He wanted to break and run. Let the old witch work her own evil. He didn't want to get too close to the torture that would grip Sam and drive him out of his mind to his death.

Her fingers worked nimbly and swiftly as the old witch stippled the doll with pins. Then she stepped back. It was over now, Jeb thought, with relief.

The old witch sensed his thoughts. From somewhere she produced a long, wicked-looking hat pin. She turned to Jeb and a toothless grin creased the wrinkles in her face. "Wait," she said. "Just wait."

The old witch turned her attention to another tree. For the first time, Jeb saw that there was a second doll fixed there.

With a howl of joy in some secret joke that only she shared the witch plunged the hat pin into this second doll right at its waistline. The pin quivered, stuck fast to the tree. Jeb turned white. He felt a tickle of pain run through his stomach.

"Who?" he asked hoarsely, hugging his middle with his arms and bending forward to ease the pain. It couldn't be, he thought. It just couldn't be.

The witch turned on Jeb. There was glee in her eyes.

"*You!*" the old woman roared. "Your partner, Sam Barker, was here! He came to me last night."

Jeb groaned. "You'll both die tonight," the old woman sang.

HOWLING with pain, Jeb Randall ran into the blackness of the night, screaming for mercy, running, running, seeking the end to his pain—an end that would come only when he met the black fate that awaited him and Sam Barker.

THE END

YOU WITH YOUR SCIENCE---AND YOUR SMUG CERTAINTIES! CAN YOU EXPLAIN AWAY THE APPARITIONS THAT LURK IN THE JUNGLE IN THE DEEPEST OF NIGHT? YOU WHO BELIEVE THAT ALL KNOWING CEASES WITH THE LAST BEAT OF THE HUMAN HEART! IT IS YOU WHO IS CHALLENGED TO READ THE ...

VENGEANCE of the LIVING DEAD

YOU HAVE DESTROYED US, GAR MACON--- AND NO MATTER WHERE YOU FLEE, YOU WILL RETURN TO FACE THE WRATH OF THE LIVING DEAD!

--NO! YOU'LL NEVER GET ME! NEVER--NEVER!

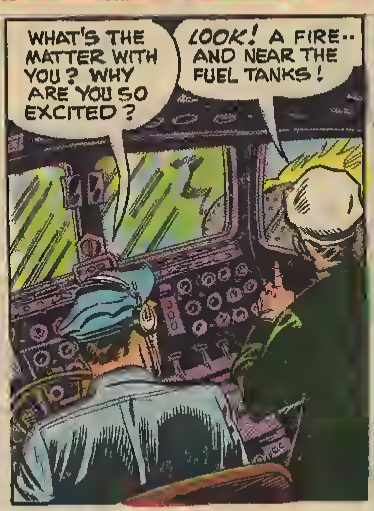
IT WAS A DARK, CLEAR WINTRY NIGHT --AND THE WIND WHISTLED ACROSS THE RUNWAY AS GAR MACON, COMMERCIAL PILOT, MADE HIS WAY TO THE SLEEK AND HUMMING AIRLINER!

WILL YOU RETURN TO THIS COUNTRY FROM YOUR NATIVE AFRICA, FOR ANOTHER LECTURE TOUR ON BLACK MAGIC, MARCAMBO?

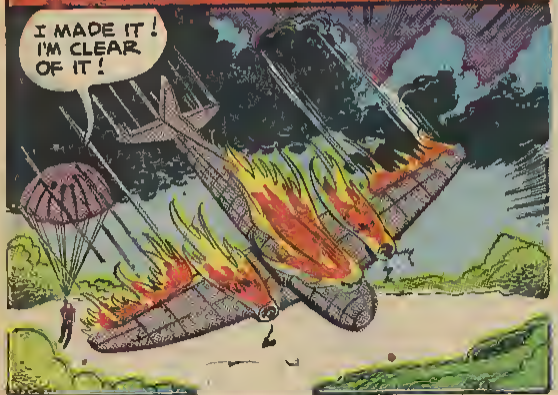
OUT OF MY WAY WILL YOU? I'VE GOT TO GET THIS SHIP UP IN THE AIR -- AND BLACK MAGIC WON'T DO IT!

MARCAMBO'S DARK EYES FLASHED THEIR UNSPOKEN CONTEMPT AT THE SNEERING PILOT. EVEN AS THE HUGE METALLIC BIRD SOARED ALOFT.

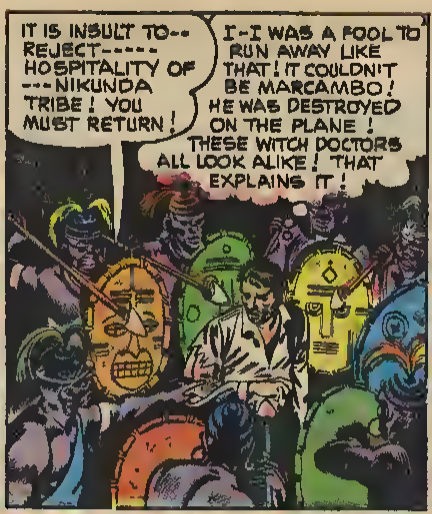
THEN THE LONG, DREARY HOURS PASSED UNTIL A SINGLE SPARK IGNITED THE CALM AIR IN A RUDE AWAKENING!



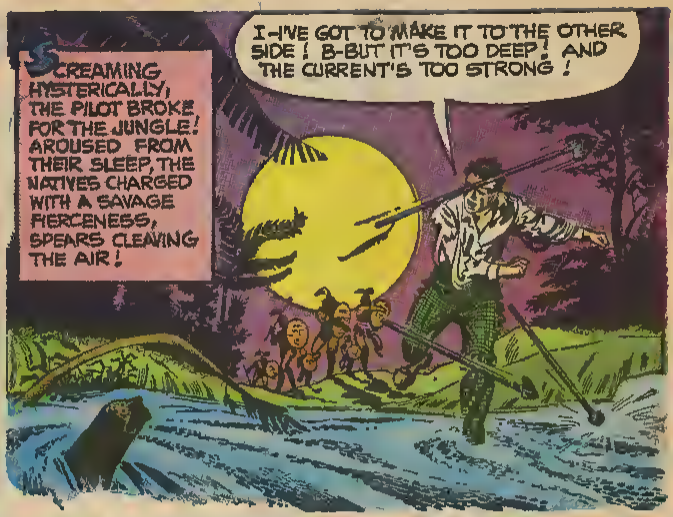
THE FLAMES CREPT FORWARD LIKE LURID CRIMSON CLAWS---AND PANIC-STRICKEN GAR DONNED HIS CHUTE AND LEAPED INTO THE CONSUMING MAW OF NIGHT---DESERTING THE OTHERS TO A SCORCHING DOOM!

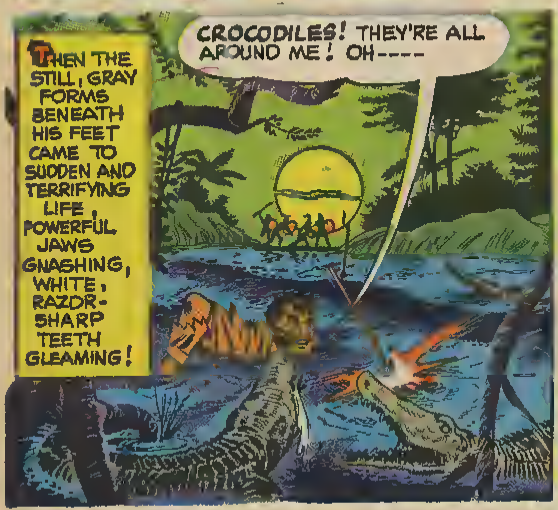


IN THE THICK OF THE JUNGLE! BUT I COULDN'T BE TOO FAR OFF FROM CIVILIZATION! ANYTHING'S BETTER THAN THAT FLYING COFFIN!
BUT DEATH WOULD HAVE BEEN A WELCOME REFUGE---IF GAR MACON KNEW OF THE FATE THAT EVEN NOW LAY AWAITING HIM THROUGH THE TWISTED, SLIMY MASSES OF JUNGLE GROWTH!
I-I'VE GOT TO MAKE IT-- I-I WON'T DIE HERE!
BUT THE JUNGLE IS A POSSESSIVE MISTRESS, RELUCTANT TO SURRENDER ITS VICTIMS FROM A TREACHEROUS EMBRACE! THE FRANTIC PILOT UNKNOWINGLY RETRACED HIS STEPS FOR HOURS! THEN---- HORROR STRUCK AT HIS FAILING HEART!
OH, NO! NO! GO AWAY! WHATEVER YOU ARE-- LET ME BE!
Y-YOU'RE NATIVES! AND I THOUGHT-- I-I WAS SEEING THINGS! WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO WITH ME?
THIS IS THEIR VILLAGE! THEY WANT ME TO ENTER IT! THEY'RE NOT HOSTILE! I-I'M SAVED!
ESCORTED TO THE HUT OF THE TRIBAL CHIEF, GAR'S BLOODSHOT EYES STRAINED TO SEE MORE CLOSELY THE VAGUE FAMILIARITY OF THE WITCH DOCTOR-- WHO STOOD IMPASSIVELY BESIDE THE LEADER. RECOGNITION MADE HIS BLOOD RUN COLD!
YOU--ARE-- WELCOME-- TO--OUR--
MARCAMBO! I-IT IS MARCAMBO!



BUT THE IMAGE OF MARCAMBO WAS ETCHED UPON HIS DISTRACTED BRAIN; AND GAR MACON COULD NOT REST IN THE THREADBARE HUT PLACED AT HIS DISPOSAL. THE JUNGLE NIGHT WAS ALIVE WITH SOUND --AND THE JUNGLE HEAT MADE HIS TEMPLES THROB!





CLINGING TO THE FLOATING LOG AS THOUGH TO THE LAST THREAD OF LIFE---GAR MACON WAS DRIVEN DOWN-STREAM BY THE SWIFT AND TREACHEROUS CURRENT!

HOURS LATER HE STAGGERED ASHORE ON TREMBLING LEGS AND STUMBLED THROUGH THE UNDERBRUSH, UNTIL AT LAST ----

AT LAST, CLOSE TO COLLAPSE, THE STRAINED AND HAGGARD PILOT REACHED HIS DESTINATION.

ASSIGNED TO A ROOM IN THE AIRPORT BARRACKS, HE SLEPT FOR TWENTY-ONE HOURS.

AND THE NEXT EVENING, BATHED, SHAVEN AND COMPOSED--

WELL--AS I SAID, THE EXPLOSION CAME FROM THE REAR OF THE PLANE AND I GUESS I WAS THE ONLY ONE LUCKY ENOUGH TO CLEAR THE SHIP! I BEAT MY WAY THROUGH THE JUNGLES TO MAKE IT HERE!

YOU SURE HAD A ROUGH TIME OF IT!

YOU ASKED FOR A SHIP BACK TO THE STATES! WELL---YOU'RE IN LUCK! THERE'S ONE GASSED UP AND READY TO TAKE OFF NOW! YOU CAN FLY 'ER!

THAT'S GREAT! WHAT A BREAK!

ONCE I CLEAR OUT OF HERE, I'LL BE OKAY AGAIN! THAT WAS ALL MY IMA-I-NATION! JUST MY CONSCIENCE WORK-ING ON ME--I GUESS.

THE REASONING OF THE UNNERVED FLYER MOMENTARILY SET HIS FEARS TO REST, AND HE BOARDED THE AIRLINER WITH SUCH HASTY INTENT--HE DIDN'T NOTICE THE STRANGE SET OF COINCIDENCES CONFRONTING HIM!

HEY, MISTER--CAN I GET A DRINK OF WATER,?

THAT'S THE STEWARDESS' DEPARTMENT, KID! AND GET THAT DOG IN BACK WHERE IT BELONGS!

OKAY---CO-PILOT! WE'RE TAKING OFF RIGHT AWAY! ALL SET?

SHE'S HUMMING AND ALL READY TO GO!

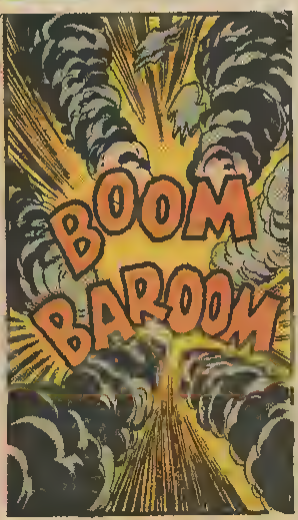
AS THE HEAVY SHIP HEADED SKYWARD--A SIGH OF RELIEF ESCAPED GAR MACON'S LIPS! BUT HIS RELIEF WAS PREMATURE! FOR WHEN HE TURNED TO FACE THE CO-PILOT--

--YOU! OH, NO!

T-THE BOY AND THE DOG! THE SAME ONES AS IN THE ORIGINAL FLIGHT THAT CRASHED!

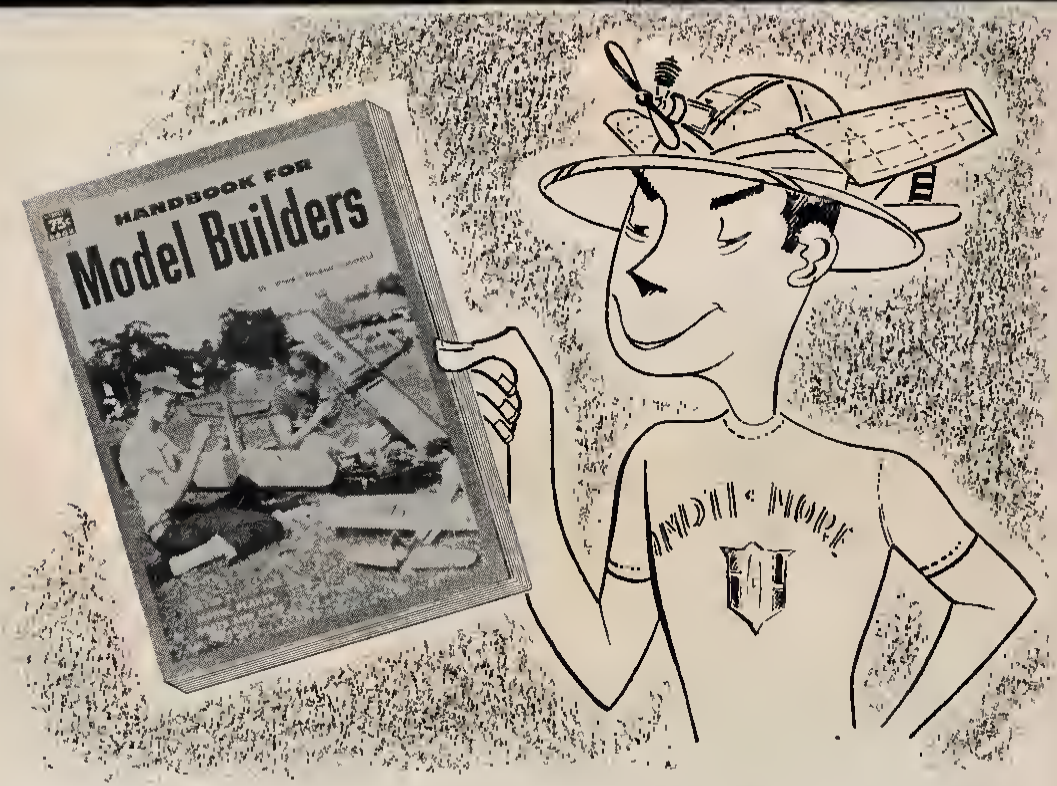
YOU'RE ALL THE SAME! THIS IS THE SAME TRIP! OH, NO! I'VE GONE CRAZY!
MARCAMBO! Y-YOU ARE THE ONE BEHIND THIS! YOU AND YOUR BLACK MAGIC!
THE MOTOR'S ON FIRE AS IT WAS BEFORE!
LAUGHING AND WEEPING HYSTERICALLY, ON THE BRINK OF MADNESS-- GAR MACON WOULD HAVE ESCAPED INTO MENTAL OBLIVION THEN!
BUT THE SHOCK OF THE APPARITIONS BEFORE HIM-- KEPT HIM FROM SO MERCIFUL A FATE!
HE LUNGED FORWARD IN A LAST DESPERATE ATTEMPT FOR FREEDOM!

LET ME THROUGH! I DON'T WANT TO DIE! I DON'T WANT TO DIE!
BUT THEY REMAINED BEFORE HIM --IMMOBILE --GHASTLY-- DEATH-LIKE STAUNCHIONS OF STEEL! AND WHEN HE LOOKED UP --MARCAMBO'S FACE GREW LARGER! HORRIFYINGLY LARGER!
I--I'LL RADIO THE AIRPORT! THAT'S IT---!
CALLING CENTER LINE AIRPORT! EMERGENCY! CALLING CENTER LINE AIRPORT-EMERGENCY! ANSWER--I ANSWER!
CENTER LINE AIRPORT REPORTING! IDENTIFY YOURSELF! UP AND OVER!
THIS IS LINER THAT JUST LEFT YOUR RUNWAY FOR THE STATES! WE'RE ON FIRE!
WHAT? YOU'RE CRAZY! NO LINER HAS LEFT OUR PLACE FOR THE STATES IN A MONTH! WHAT ARE YOU, SOME HAM OPERATOR QUEERING UP OUR FREQUENCY? GET OFF!



AND OVER THE AFRICAN MAINLAND----ON THE PRECISE SPOT WHERE GAR MACON ----THE COWARD---DESERTED HIS BURNING PLANE GAR MACON, THE SKEPTIC WHO RIDICULED MARCAMBO'S BLACK MAGIC----MET HIS UNTIMELY END!

a big, new book for MODEL BUILDERS



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